

**Excerpt from “The Leadership Revival” by David Brooks in “The New York Times,” Jan 13, 2014:**

...take a reality bath. Go off and become a stranger in a strange land. Go off to some alien part of this country or the world. Immerse yourself in the habits and daily patterns of that existence and stay there long enough to get acculturated. Stay there long enough so that you forget the herd mentality of our partisan culture.

When you return home, you will look at your own place with foreign eyes. You’ll see the contours of your own reality more clearly. When you return to native ground, you’re more likely to possess the sort of perceptiveness that Isaiah Berlin says is the basis of political judgment.

This sort of wisdom consists of “a special sensitiveness to the contours of the circumstances in which we happen to be placed; it is a capacity for living without falling foul of some permanent condition or factor which cannot be either altered, or even fully described.” This wisdom is based on a tactile awareness of your country and its people — what they want, how they react. You don’t think this awareness. You feel it. You experience a visceral oneness with culture and circumstance — the smell of the street, tinges of anger and hope and aspiration. The irony is that you are more likely to come into union with your own home culture after you have been away from it. You have to walk away from the partisan tunnel vision to see how things really are.